

## SCHOOL CRISIS FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### 1. What is emergency preparedness?

- Emergency preparedness is basically preparing the steps you will take in the event of an emergency, such as contact information, communications, and evacuation plans.

### 2. What is lockdown?

- An emergency may prevent the safe evacuation of a school building and require steps to isolate students and faculty from danger by instituting a school lockdown. In an interior lockdown situation, all students are kept in classrooms or other designated locations that are away from the danger. Faculty members are responsible for accounting for students and ensuring that no one leaves the safe area. School personnel will also secure building entrances, ensuring that no unauthorized individuals leave or enter the building. Exterior lockdown procedures may also be used to ensure the safety of students when an incident occurs in the community. Parents are permitted access to the building and to their children if it is safe for them to do so. For example, a lockdown is instituted during acts of violence or by an unauthorized intruder in either the school or in the neighborhood. This is usually of a short duration in time and no stockpiling of water and food is needed.

### 3. What is shelter-in-place?

- Shelter-in-place is a short-term solution to a short-term problem. If an accident or attack that created contaminated air occurred in the nearby area, everyone would be brought indoors, including those in trailers. Building personnel would close all windows and doors and shut down the heating, ventilation, and air conditioning system (HVAC). This would create a neutral pressure in the building, meaning the contaminated air would not be drawn into the building.

Shelter-in-place is a short-term measure (measured in minutes or hours, not days) designed to use a facility and its indoor atmosphere to temporarily separate people from a hazardous outdoor environment. The alternative would be to evacuate into a hazardous situation, thereby causing harm to all involved. No stockpiling of water and food is needed for shelter-in-place. Parents would not be separated from their children for long periods of time. Once the outside air is safe to breathe, the children are released to parents/approved adults.

### 4. What if a child is exposed to a biological or chemical contaminant?

- In the event of an exposure – and the child is showing obvious symptoms of such – staff members who have been instructed by a member of the Crisis Management Team would conduct basic decontamination.

5. What is basic decontamination?

- If a child shows symptoms of exposure, staff members would separate the child from other children and direct him/her to wash thoroughly with soap and water. If possible, school personnel would make sure that the child showered and would provide alternative clothing. The exposed clothing would be put in plastic bags and the bags would be sealed.

Removing a contaminated person's clothing effectively removes in excess of 80% of contaminants from the person; the alternative would be to do nothing and thereby cause the person to suffer pain and possible serious injury.

6. What is a parent reunification site?

- If public safety officials require that a school building be evacuated, students and staff members will be safely transported by bus to a designated parent-student reunification center. Parents will be informed of the reunification location via the school system emergency messaging system and local media. At the reunification center, students will be released to their parents/approved adults upon presentation of proper identification.

7. What if a child is riding a school bus at the time of a crisis?

- School bus drivers will be in contact with the Transportation Office for instructions in the event that a crisis occurs while students are in transport. Bus drivers will be informed to use common sense and not travel toward the crisis location. Parents will be informed of the parent-student reunification center location via the school system emergency messaging system and local media.

8. How will the school staff know what to do in the event of a crisis?

- Schools are mandated by Homeland Security to develop and practice a Crisis Management Plan for possible emergencies. All staff are informed of the Crisis Management Plan and routinely practice what should be done in an emergency. The school integrates its plan with a district-wide plan whereby all schools within the system can provide resources and assistance if necessary. The school also has developed relationships with community resources for cooperation and assistance during emergencies.